



Current Affairs:- Aug 21 – Aug 31, 2019

- The chief minister of Punjab has launched a universal health insurance scheme “Sarbat Sehat Bima Yojana” benefiting nearly 46 lakh families. Punjab has become the first state in the country to offer medical insurance cover to the maximum number of its people. The scheme would entitle beneficiaries to avail annual cashless treatment up to Rs.5 lakh per family per year, including pre-existing diseases. Note: Chief Minister of Punjab: Amarinder Singh; Governor of Punjab: VP Singh Badnore.
 - Former India paceman Shanthakumaran Sreesanth’s life ban has been reduced to 7 years. The Ban will end in 2020. The BCCI banned Sreesanth for life in September 2013, along with his Rajasthan Royals teammates Ajit Chandila and Ankeet Chavan, for indulging in alleged spot-fixing in the IPL.
 - Indian Para Swimmer Satendra Singh Lohia has become the first Asian swimmer to cross the Catalina Channel of America. Satendra holds the Asian record of crossing both the English and Catalina channels.
 - Union HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal ‘Nishank’ launched the training programme NISHTHA, (National Initiative for School Heads and Teachers Holistic Advancement) to improve Learning Outcomes at the Elementary level across the country. This is the largest teachers’ training programme of its kind in the world.
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- Amazon has opened its largest campus in the world in Hyderabad. Note: CEO of Amazon: Jeff Bezos; Headquarters: Seattle, United States.
 - Maharashtra's Tribal Development Department in association with the Pace Educational Trust launched an academic programme "Super 50". The programme has been launched for young tribal students aspiring to be doctors and engineers.
 - The State Rooftop Solar Attractiveness Index-SARAL was launched during the Review Planning and Monitoring (RPM) Meeting with States and State Power Utilities. Karnataka has topped the index which evaluates Indian states based on their attractiveness for rooftop development.
 - The Reserve Bank of India has permitted processing of e-mandate on credit and debit cards for recurring transactions (merchant payments). The maximum limit for such a transaction will be Rs.2,000. Note: Governor of RBI: Shaktikant Das; Headquarters: Mumbai; Founded: 1 April 1935, Kolkata.
 - JNU Professor Meeta Narain was conferred the 'Pushkin Medal – 2019'. This award is the highest honour given to an Indian scholar by the Russian government. Pushkin Medal is given to a scholar of Russian language and literature for outstanding contribution to Russian studies abroad. Note: President of Russia: Vladimir Putin.
 - Artificial intelligence (AI) company Cerebras Systems has unveiled the world's largest single silicon-based processor named Cerebras Wafer Scale Engine (WSE).
 - The Board of Control for Cricket in India has announced that mobile payments and e-commerce company "Paytm" has retained the title sponsorship rights for all cricket matches, domestic and international, played in India for 5 years. Note: Paytm Founder: Vijay Shekhar Sharma; Parent Organization: One97 Communications.
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- United Nations observed 21 August as International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism. Note: Secretary General of the United Nations: António Guterres.
 - “International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief” was observed on 22 August.
 - The Health Ministry has notified the new warnings on “Tobacco packs”. The text messages that will be printed on the packs are “tobacco causes painful death”. A quitline number “1800-11-2356” will also be printed on the packs. The new sets of health warnings, including enlarged pictorial images and text messages, covering 85% of the packet area will assist the users to quit.
 - Pakistan has been placed on the blacklist of the Financial Action Task Force’s Asia Pacific Group. Pakistan has been blacklisted for non-compliance and non-enforcement of safeguards against terror financing and money laundering.
 - Discovery India and World Wildlife Fund (WWF) India have partnered with the Forest Directorate, the government of West Bengal and local communities to preserve Sundarbans, the mangrove forest, the habitat of Bengal tigers, to reduce the tiger-human conflict. The move is also a part of a global movement “Project CAT -Conserving Acres for Tigers” which aimed at building healthy habitats for Tigers.
 - The Securities and Exchange Board of India has announced a new mechanism to reward insider trading informants to uncover insider trading cases. The reward would be 10 per cent of the money collected, subject to a maximum amount of Rs.1 crore. Note: SEBI Headquarter: Mumbai; Chairman: Ajay Tyagi.
 - Bollywood Actor Akshay Kumar has made it to the 4th position on the Forbes magazine’s Worlds Highest-Paid Actors of 2019 list. Hollywood star Dwayne ‘Rock’ Johnson tops the Forbes list of the 10 highest-paid actors.
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- For the second consecutive year, Hollywood star Scarlett Johansson has topped the Forbes' list of highest-paid female actors in the world.
 - Russia launched an unmanned rocket carrying a life-size humanoid robot named Fedor, (Final Experimental Demonstration Object Research).
 - Former Indian opener Vikram Rathour was appointed team India's new batting coach, while Bharath Arun and R. Sridhar were retained as bowling and fielding coaches.
 - United Nations observed 23 August as "International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition".
 - Former Union finance minister and senior BJP leader Arun Jaitley passed away. He was a lawyer by profession. He held the portfolios of Finance Ministry, Corporate Affairs Ministry, Defence Ministry, and Minister of Information and Broadcasting.
 - The 597-ft tall 'Statue of Unity' in Gujarat and Mumbai's Soho House have been featured by the Time magazine in its second annual list of the 2019 World's greatest places, in a compilation of 100 new and newly "noteworthy destinations. Note: The 'Statue of Unity', the world's tallest statue, is a tribute to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, independent India's first home minister as well as deputy prime minister.
 - The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has declared Ocean Energy as renewable energy status. It has clarified that energy produced using various forms of ocean energy such as tidal, wave and ocean thermal energy conversion shall be eligible for meeting the non-solar Renewable Purchase Obligations (RPO). Note: Union Minister of New and Renewable Energy: Raj Kumar Singh.
 - Ace Indian shuttler PV Sindhu has won the World Championships title defeating Japan's Nozomi Okuhara in the final at Basel, Switzerland. With this victory, the 24-year-old shuttler has become the first Indian to book a gold medal at the World Championships.
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- Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi launched the RuPay card in UAE. RuPay card scheme was launched in 2012 to fulfil the Reserve Bank of India's vision to have a domestic, open and multilateral system of payments. India has already launched the RuPay card in Singapore and Bhutan. Note: RuPay card scheme was conceived and launched by NPCI.
 - Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan launched heritage postal stamp of Bandra station in Mumbai.
 - The Central Vigilance Commission has constituted a 4-member Advisory Board for Banking Frauds. The ABBF will be headed by former Vigilance Commissioner T.M. Bhasin. The panel will function as the 1st level of examination of all large fraud cases. Lenders will refer all large fraud cases above Rs.50 crore to the board and on receipt of its recommendation or advice, the bank concerned would take further action in such matters.
 - In football, Gokulam Kerala FC won the 129th Durand Cup, defeating heavyweights Mohun Bagan 2-1 at the Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata.
 - The Reserve Bank of India approved the transfer of record Rs.1.76 lakh crore dividend and surplus reserves to the government. It is the highest-ever surplus amount transferred by the RBI to government.
 - Intel Corp launched its latest processor, it's first using artificial intelligence (AI), designed for large computing centres. The name of the chip is Nervana NNP-I or Springhill and it is based on a 10 nanometre Ice Lake processor that will allow it to cope with high workloads using minimal amounts of energy. Note: CEO of Intel: Robert H. Swan.
 - Microsoft India launched a program, called 'Digital Governance Tech Tour', under which it will train 5000 government employees over the next year on AI (artificial intelligence) and cloud computing skills.
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- India's first woman Director General of Police (DGP), Kanchan Chaudhary Bhattacharya passed away.
 - The Delhi and District Cricket Association (DDCA) decided to rename Feroz Shah Kotla Stadium as Arun Jaitley Stadium in the memory of former president of DDCA.
 - Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilizers launched a mobile application "Janaushadhi Sugam". This app will enable people to search for Janaushadhi generic medicines and the stores at the tip of their fingers.
 - Lieutenant Governor of Delhi Anil Bajjal launched a 'QR Code Scheme' on the Himmat Plus app in Delhi. This mobile app was launched by the Delhi Police to ensure the safety of women. This added feature is to ensure that only genuine and verified drivers ferry passenger to their destinations from airports and railway and metro stations.
 - Tamil Nadu government launched its exclusive 24×7 education channel, named 'Kalvi Tholaikkatchi' (Education TV), for school students. This TV channel, aimed at benefiting students of classes I to XII.
 - Public sector Bank, Canara Bank has launched India's first OTP facility for ATM withdrawals. Now Canara Bank ATMs get safer and more secured with OTP facility on cash withdrawals above ₹10,000 in a day.
 - Indian documentary film "I'm Jeeja" has won the award at the 14th edition of the 'We Care Film Festival on Disability Issues' in the 'Under 30 minute' category. The documentary directed by Swati Chakraborty attempts to explore the lives and battles of people living with the disability.
 - An Indo-Israel joint venture's "Astra Rafael Communication System" was inaugurated in Hyderabad. The system will design, develop and manufacture tactical communication systems for Indian armed forces.
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- The Group of 7 or G7 Summit began in Biarritz, France. India was invited as a special guest in the summit.
 - Indian Air Force's Wing Commander Shalija Dhama has become the first female officer in the country to become Flight Commander of a flying unit.
 - On the occasion of National Sports Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Fit India Movement at the Indira Gandhi Stadium Complex in New Delhi.
 - India has become the first country in the world to issue Biometric Seafarer Identity Document (BSID), capturing the facial biometric data of seafarers.
 - United Nations observed International Day Against Nuclear Tests on 29th August.
 - Delhi government launches mega 10-week campaign against dengue and chikungunya. The campaign has been titled as "10 Hafte, 10 Baje 10 minute Har Ravivar, Dengue Par War". As per the campaign, people of Delhi are requested to give 10 minutes every Sunday at 10 a.m. to check all sources of stagnant water at their homes as the dengue mosquitoes breed only in clean water. Note: Chief Minister of Delhi: Arvind Kejriwal; Lt. Governor: Anil Baijal.
 - The Union Environment Ministry has transferred Rs.47,436 crore to 27 States for afforestation. The amount has been released from the Compensatory Afforestation Fund.
 - Union Human Resource Development Minister launched one of the world's largest Integrated Online Junction for School Education 'Shagun' in New Delhi. School Education Shagun is an over-arching initiative to improve the school education system by creating a junction for all online portals and websites relating to various activities of the Department of School Education and Literacy in the Government of India and all States and Union Territories.
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- The Steel Users Federation of India has signed an MoU with the Bombay Stock Exchange to launch trading in steel futures. Note: Managing Director and CEO of BSE: Ashish Kumar Chauhan.
 - ICRA Ltd ousted its Managing Director and group Chief Executive Officer Naresh Takkar, over allegations of misconduct at the credit rating agency under Takkar. This is the first time a top official of a rating agency has been fired by the company's board.
 - Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM), has been conferred the prestigious SKOCH Governance Gold Award.
 - Liverpool Football player Virgil Van Dijk won UEFA's Player of the Year award, while England footballer Lucy Bronze took the Women's Player of the Year award.
 - United Nations observed 30th August as International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances.
 - Air India, India's national airline, banned the usage of single-use plastic aboard its flights.
 - Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has announced a big consolidation of public sector banks. Under the scheme of amalgamation, 10 public sector banks are to be merged into four banks. After the amalgamation, the total number of Public Sector Banks in the country will come down to 12. The amalgamation of banks will be in the following manner:
 - Punjab National Bank, Oriental Bank of Commerce and United Bank of India to be merged into one single bank.
 - Canara Bank and Syndicate Bank are to be merged.
 - Union Bank of India, Andhra Bank and Corporation Bank are to be merged.
 - Indian Bank will be merged with Allahabad Bank.
 - Chief Minister of Meghalaya launched the 'Walk to Work' campaign in the state.
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- The Maharashtra cabinet cleared the “vertical property rules” to create a database of all flats, buildings and commercial complexes.
- Tamil Nadu’s Dindigul locks and Kandangi sarees have received Geographical Indication (GI) tags. Note: The famous Dindigul locks are known throughout the world for their superior quality and durability; and this is why the city is called Lock City.

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